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what a privilege is it to the citizens of this metropolis, that three times every week, free of all charge, with no trouble but the trouble of going, if *that* be a trouble, can a course of lectures be attended, in a place where every facility exists for comprehending the subjects brought before the mind. And it would be unjust to say that many do not avail themselves of this invaluable privilege. The lecture-room is small, not capable of containing much more than the number that do attend, which is generally about, on an average, from one hundred to a hundred and twenty. As a proof that there exists in the people of Dublin a thirst for botanical knowledge it may be stated, on the authority of the lecturer, that several, who attend regularly, come a distance of four miles. When we consider what trivial creatures we are—how much more prone to fall in love with our breakfast, after a morning walk, than with the loveliest flower that Flora can produce, we may admit that there is here *individual* instances of zeal to profit by the advantages which our good city has—yet we must give it as our opinion, that, in general, that interest is not taken in the science, which opportunities so very valuable afford. Now, the very peasantry of the country have long been famous for their passion for botany. And that the old Irish were well acquainted with it, is evident from the fact, that Keough and Threlkeld were able to obtain *Irish* names for almost every plant they collected. It also appears that considerable advances were made towards a systematic classification. Thus, they called by the genuine name of *Meacan*, such plants as had tap roots; *Brunsean*, such grasses as had creeping roots; *Trathkin*, such as had naked wing stems; *Raithleadh*, such as had imbricated heads, &c. But we are getting at once into the depths of botany.

Ireland, though abounding with a variety of plants, which the exuberance of the soil spontaneously produces, was yet, until a comparatively late period, but little explored. The first attempt of modern times to investigate its botanical productions was made by Doctor Threlkeld. In 1726, he published a short treatise on native plants, especially such as grow in the vicinity of Dublin. He was followed by Keough, and some time after by Dr. Rutt, who, in his "Natural History of the County of Dublin," has devoted some portion to the consideration of its plants. These, with a few incidental notes in Smith's History of Waterford, were all that had been attempted in Ireland, till Doctor Wade, in 1794, published his catalogue. From that period public attention seems to have been strongly excited. The Gardens at Glasnevin were established, a professor appointed, and the public crowded to hear a course of lectures to which they were so liberally invited. Groups of botanical students were now to be seen in all directions exploring the treasures of their native soil, and picking up and inspecting, with curious eye, every little plant which caught their fancy. Now, the meanest looking shrub became an instructive companion to the lover of nature—our young men and our young ladies became ashamed of their ignorance—the flowers that open their little petals, and the insects which disported among their silken folds, had each a story full of interest.

"The simplest floweret of the vale,
The simplest note that swells the gale,
The common air, the earth, the skies,
To them were opening Paradise!"

We are afraid this interest has abated—we hope not considerably.

In our next article on botany, we will give a walk through the gardens.

GREAT PLAGUES.

The following very curious article is translated from an old French book, printed in 1651, entitled, "Le Tableau de la Fortune," by Mr. Chevreux. We are not aware that it was ever, to use the old phrase, "*done into English*," before, and, though not exclusively Irish, we give it as singular and interesting:

"There are very few persons who do not know that famine is occasioned by the dryness of the air, and that its corruption engenders the greatest pestilences. But as there are several species of these, there is one whose cause has not yet been discovered, and in pursuit of which philosophy has most often erred.

"There was a plague in Athens of such a nature that the birds of prey fled from those who had been seized with it, towards the sea; and from the bodies of such as were sick,

little snakes were seen to issue, which fed upon the arms and legs, and which, entering again whenever an attempt was made to touch them, enveloped themselves among the muscles, and caused the patient to endure tortures more insupportable than any that ever were inflicted by the instruments of tyranny.

"Thales of Candia was obliged to go to Lacedæmon to deliver the citizens ("by the charms of his lyre") from a plague with which they had been severely afflicted; and we read in Homer that there also was one among the Greeks whose virulence could not be mitigated except by the charms of music.

"The Phalerians, unable to find either remedy or consolation in a plague, consulted the Oracle in order to learn what would be its final result. The response was that their misery would not cease unless they immolated to Juno a young virgin every year. According to lot, Valeria Luperca was the destined victim. In the midst of this mournful ceremony, of which they made a great mystery, an eagle alighted upon her and bore away the sword of the priest, and placed it upon a heifer, which afterwards served as the victim; and thus the Phalerians with Valeria were delivered from this calamity. In the country of Lacedæmon a like adventure was witnessed in favour of Helen, and this prodigy which astonished the people, prevented them ever after from leading their daughters to the Altar, since they could satisfy the Oracle with beasts.

"When the soldiers of Avidius Crassus, the Lieutenant of Marc Antony, were in the city of Seleucia, they discovered a coffer in the temple of Apollo, on which they laid hands the moment they saw it. But never was avarice better punished, and never was curiosity more fatal than theirs: for there issued from it an air so foul, that after it had infected the whole region of Babylon, it penetrated as far as Greece, and passed by the same route to Italy, causing the third part of the world to perish.

"After the death of Pericles, leader of the Athenians, at the close of the first year of the Peloponnesian war, Thucydides relates that there was a plague so dreadful that it baffled all the powers of medicine, and so general that it descended from Ethiopia into Egypt and Lybia; spread as far as Persia, and ceased not till it had desolated the whole of Greece. This author, who was himself smitten with the disease, gives an astonishing description of it: he says the heat which was felt was so great that some precipitated themselves into wells to obtain relief, while others sought the nearest river where they extinguished this fire only with their lives.

"In the days of Gallus a plague of this kind issued from the coast of Ethiopia, which consumed all the inhabitants to the south, and visited all other parts of the world.

"And although Cardan believed that it would not prevail more than two or three years at the most, owing to the subtilty of the air, which contained it, the winds changing it every hour by their continual agitation; yet it is certain that it lasted for nearly ten years.

"The author of the Chronicles of Great Britain says that in the reign of Calualadrus (?) there was one in that kingdom so protracted that it continued fully eleven years, and so fearful that the living could scarcely supply the demand for graves.

"Three hundred and thirty-one years ago, 30,000 perished by a plague at Cologne, 12,000 at Treves, 16,000 at Mayence, 6,000 at Wormes, 9,000 at Spire, 11,000 or 12,000 at Strasburg, 14,000 at Basle, and a vast number besides in several villages. This calamity alarmed the Germans to such a degree that the majority were more solicitous to abandon than to cultivate their lands, on which account a great portion of the population that remained would have perished miserably with famine, while a similar fate awaited those that had fled, if Sicily had not now proved the granary of Germany, as she was formerly that of Rome.

"Guy de Cholia records that there occurred in his time a plague which afflicted all nature, and which having passed from the Euphrates to the Frozen Ocean, left only the fourth part of the world unvisited. It was then that love and charity disappeared from the earth. The son saw the father expiring without taking the slightest pains to comfort him; the brother and the sister shunned each other as two irreconcilable enemies; the mother abandoned her infant, lest she should carry her own death even in her bosom, and the wife, far from regretting the absence of her husband, feared nothing so much as to meet him. This pestilence was remarkable in this, that amid the great multitude of its victims were found very few of the rich. But two years after, ac.

ording to the same author, appeared another plague which scarcely attacked the poor at all, as if it were intended to shew that even poverty is sometimes an advantage.

"Of all the plagues of which I have spoken, there was none more cruel or more fatal than one which lasted a year in the chief town of Provence. While in the act of receiving nourishment they fell promiscuously dead. They dropped from the table and expired before they could be placed on a bed, and the number of deaths was so great that the cemeteries were not capable of containing the corpses. The effect of this malady was so instantaneous and so certain, that those who were smitten wrapped themselves hopelessly, in winding sheets, and often their life was cut short in the effort.

"I speak not here of the plague that prevailed in the time of the Emperor Maurice, changing men in such a manner that they resembled monsters, nor of many others that afflicted Rome, Paris and Constantinople."

PHRENOLOGY.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE DUBLIN PENNY JOURNAL.

Sir—I am a very smart little man, and during my little life have been remarkable for my bee-like propensities, flitting from flower to flower, touching all, but seldom resting on any. Like all smart little men, whenever I imbibed an opinion, I fondled it as a mother would her first born, and treated my opponents with disdain. So, seven or eight years ago, having heard that PHRENOLOGY had been crushed by a smarter little man than myself, one Jeffrey, a Scotchman, who is now a Lord Advocate, or something of that sort, I vowed a vow that the *gibberish* of that science of lumps should never be uttered by me—and from that period, many have been the puns, (at which I not only laughed myself, but tried to get others to laugh too,) which I made on *Gall* and *Spurzheim*, and all the organs from No. 1. to 33. But a Scotchman, who has located himself in Grafton-street, has staggered my scepticism. In the most smooth and convincing manner, he placed the bulb of his instrument in my ear, and whirled it round my cranium, and after sundry measurements and markings, told me that I had "a very favourable head—the intellectual development, in particular, being—" "Bah! Mr. Wilson," said I, "by your instrument and your looks, one might suppose you were a dentist, an amateur of the *Tuscan* order." "Oh!" rejoined Mr. Wilson, "I assure you, Sir, that the public are becoming every day more convinced of the soundness and conclusiveness of the reasonings and facts which support the science of Phrenology. I have, myself, daily proofs of it. Individuals come to my rooms with minds fully prepossessed against the system, and not one departs without either becoming a convert, or his *aversion*, at least, being removed. I am put to the test in a thousand ways, and, except in a few minor matters, never fail to convince those who visit me that the science is based on truth." "Based on bumps, you mean, Mr. Wilson," said I. "No punning, if you please," again rejoined the Phrenologist. I looked at the paper, and began to feel the first symptoms of attachment. Ideality was large—comparison was large—firmness was large—benevolence was large—*conscientiousness* was large—I instinctively put my hand up to my head—wit was large—*nay, tune* was large, and yet my voice is as musical as a donkey's, when its braying is wafted on the breeze during the calm tranquillity of a summer evening. "Why, Mr. Wilson, the science *must* be true—I *feel* it!"

At this critical moment, a bustle on the stairs announced the approach of visitors. Vexed at being caught in a Phrenologist's trap, I tried but in vain, to effect my escape—the door was opened, and two or three of those fine creatures, who almost make shy bachelor's like me worship the sex, accompanied by brothers, *lovers*, aunts, and mothers, crowded into the room. "Oh! Mr. — are you here! you, the *hatee* of Phrenology in every shape and form!" The fact was obvious—so after enduring a little rillery, the whole party prepared to pass examination. Nothing could exceed the merriment and laughter which prevailed during the inspection of the heads of the *male* portion of the visitors. But one fine-looking young man, on submitting his cranium, created, if possible, more titillation than all the rest. There was *one*, however, who displayed, in spite of her smiles, a visible anxiety that *this* particular individual should pass muster with credit. Her brilliant black eye was cast wistfully upon the operator and his *victim*; and when she saw him marking *comparison* 6—*attachment* 7—*congruity* 6—when she saw all the mental

and all the moral powers in full developement, that eye gleamed with a lustre—a tremulous lustre—indicative of delight and affection.

In the midst of our amusement a neatly dressed young woman appeared, and handed a note to Mr. Wilson. It contained a request from a lady that her head might be examined, as she intended to take her into service. The girl apparently was ignorant of the errand on which she was sent; and when accompanied by the ladies into an adjoining room, the echoings shouts of mirth revealed that the poor girl thought she was about to undergo some fearful ordeal—that the test act, as far as she was concerned, was not yet repealed. Nothing could reconcile her mind to submit to what she thought to be so degrading. *She*, forsooth, have her head squared and gauged—*she*, that was well and decently reared—no, no, they might try their *funnyrology* on other people, but they should never do it on her.

But for the present, I will drop the sportive, and take up the serious strain. My present letter is intended to contain a *very* brief sketch of Phrenology.

This science—if indeed it *be* a science—is a system of mental philosophy founded on facts ascertainable by consciousness and observation. Its name is derived from two Greek words, signifying *mind* and *discourse*.

Dr. Gall is the founder of the system. Dr. Spurzheim, though he did not first start the system, became so able an auxiliary and associate of Dr. Gall, that these two gentlemen may be regarded as the individuals who have actually founded a new system of philosophy.

The science is said *not* to have been reared *at once* by lively imaginations, but gradually to have attained its present maturity by the careful collection of facts and observations.

It divides the head into various compartments, and asserts that the mental and moral powers and dispositions may be known by the inspection of these compartments.

The common and more universally received division, or *map of the head*, contains thirty-three compartments, which have appropriate names. This is called Dr. Spurzheim's order of the organs.

In the present letter I will give you Mr. Wilson's scale, intending, should you approve of this communication, to give you more on the subject.

There are *twenty* *moral* and *twenty* *intellectual* powers. Passing by the arrangement of *classes*, which can be taken up again, I will just furnish a table to the wood-cuts of the heads.

1. Philoprogenitiveness, the love of offspring, is situated immediately over the hollow of the neck. Its uses are, the preservation of the species, connecting with it parental affection and sympathy. Its abuse, the spoiling of children by excessive indulgence.

2. Amativeness, the root of conjugal affection. Its abuse is, immoral desires, the fountain of innumerable evils. It lies rather beneath and on each side of the former.

3. Destructiveness, the taking away of life. Its use is the removal of obstacles and the annihilation of evil. Its abuses are cruelty, murder, wrath, severity of manner and speech. Its organ is behind the back and upper part of the ear.

4. Constructiveness, the power of putting together. Its use is in the mechanical arts, &c. and its abuse is in spending time over useless and unprofitable inventions. Its organ is at the temple, over the outer part of *number*.

5. Concentrativeness, the power of bringing the mind to bear upon given subjects. Its use is in steadily performing the social and relative duties; and in reasoning. Its abuse is over-abstractness of the mind, excessive attachment to particular objects or places. Its organ lies over the middle of Philoprogenitiveness.

6. Attachment, this is the root of friendship, and combined with Amativeness, produces marriage. Its organ is on each side of the previous one, being closely allied to it.

7. Combativeness, the inclination to meet danger, and to resist attack. Its abuses are a love of contention, and willingness to dispute or assault. Lies behind the ear, upward from Amativeness.

8. Ideality. This gives a taste for the beautiful and sublime, and is large in poets and imaginative writers. Its abuses are, a too great love of change, extravagant ideas, and a disposition to neglect the duties of life, and live in the region of romance. It lies on the side of the head, between Faith and Constructiveness, with its fore part resting on Music.

9. Self-esteem, confidence in our own power and worth,